

Background

The Municipal Water Supply - Efficiency Requirements Act, Chapter 5, Laws of 2003 (Municipal Water Law), amended the State Board of Health Code (43.20 RCW) to require that municipal water suppliers provide water service to all new retail customers within retail service area under certain conditions.

What is a Retail Service Area?

The retail service area is the area within which water is or will be sold directly to the ultimate consumers (as defined by Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition). The water provided in the retail service area may come from a source for which the utility has its own water right, or the utility may provide water for its retail service area by obtaining water from a utility with water rights, or a combination of the two.

Designation of a retail service area occurs when a municipal water supplier obtains Department of Health (DOH) approval of a water system plan (WSP). Retail service area designations must be consistent with applicable adopted local land use plans, comprehensive plans, coordinated water system plans, watershed plans, and development regulations.

How does a Retail Service Area affect my Water System?

According to the Municipal Water Law, a municipal water supplier, (as now defined in RCW 90.03.015) has a duty to serve new water service (including individual connections) within the identified retail service area if the utility:

- Can provide water service in a timely and reasonable manner;
- Has sufficient water rights, or uses water from a source that has a water right;
- Has sufficient capacity to serve the water in a safe and reliable manner as determined by the Department of Health; and,
- Is consistent with the requirements of any comprehensive plans or development regulations adopted under chapter 36.70A RCW or any other applicable adopted comprehensive plans, land use plans, or development regulations.

For More Information:

Department of Health, Office of Drinking Water, Regional Offices:

Southwest Regional Office	360-664-0768
Northwest Regional Office	253-395-6750
Eastern Regional Office	509-456-3115